The Splendor of Light

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“The curse of his language etched Nef’î’s voice into history; but that same voice, also prepared its own end, sealing the poet’s fate. However, the curse of Echo’s language deprived her of her own voice; while she wanted to cry out her love, she was condemned to only an echo. Just like Leyla, she became a voice that erased its own existence within a love named after it, a voice lost in someone else’s story.

“I don’t like Freud. In him, narcissism is reduced to a pathology. However, the history of the concept is that it was branded as a sin by the church in the Middle Ages; today, when the word narcissist is mentioned, what comes to mind is not a mythological hero, but a personality type lacking empathy.

Why are we listening to this man?! To understand what he’s saying, one must have read a lot of books beforehand. He’s not talking to us, he’s talking to himself.” He draws a connection between Nef'i and Echo, and between Echo and Majnun's Layla. Who cares?...

“Narcissus is not selfish. Not at all! He never knew that the reflection in the water belonged to him. As fate would have it, he was like someone who was trapped in a devilish trap, with subtle irony and cruelty. A punishment that steals awareness and consumes the victim with blind submission. Even in death, he did not understand what he was a victim of.

While our old friend was leading us through the dark labyrinths of mythology, my eyes fell on the humorist. This time, he seemed far from the idea of mischievously

extracting prey from the flow of the words with full attention and seriousness.

“The Cypriot sculptor makes a perfect statue of women from ivory in response to their flaws. From his imagination emerged a being without will, without a past, without a voice. He loves it and becomes passionately attached to this form he created. He begs Aphrodite, and the statue transforms into a living woman who is not himself.

“And Hephaestus!.. His tragedy has changed form: in the form of mockery and exhibition. Because he was born ugly and lame, he was rejected by Hera and banished from Olympus; then he was married to Aphrodite, but this was not a reward, but rather a form of contempt circulating among the gods. Even at the height of his craft, in the scene where he catches Ares and Aphrodite in a golden net, the retaliation does not lead to satisfaction, but to a re-enactment of his own humiliation before all of Olympus; while the gods laugh, Poseidon intervenes and sets the lovers free, Hephaestus receives no compensation. So his tragedy is an unending, cyclical tragedy of exhibition, and he spends his time in his workshop making tools for the needs of the gods with his young female servants, who are also his creations.

Are there any other gods and goddesses from antiquity who didn't make an appearance on stage? Or... am I being too hasty in thinking like that? Our old friend, as if he had heard the objections running through my mind, finally turned to didactic explanations.

“When I asked Aura, she gave this answer: Echo, because of her curse, cannot form her own sentences; she can only repeat the last words spoken by others. There is no physical robot, only voice and language. This fairy figure from mythology is a perfect prototype of today’s great language models and voice assistants. Artificial intelligence, like Echo, processes, analyzes, and reflects back to us the massive human-made data, that is,

what we say. However, it does not have a deep consciousness or its own independent will like Echo; it is merely a perfect “echo” of human language.

I thought to myself, “"There! That's how you should talk to us," Be understandable! Since you're going to comment on the meaning of the time we live in, consider the comprehension capacity of those you're addressing. But then I thought that all these analogies couldn't prevent our old friend from feeling sad about Echo or Aura. This man has a pathological capacity to put himself in the place of others. Moreover, not just the living. “Narcissus reminds me of a person who cannot perceive what is happening.

Narcissus reminds me of a person who is unable to perceive what is happening around them. Someone who doesn't understand that what he sees is himself, who is trapped in the delusion of personifying it by othering it. But his fate followed a tragic path reminiscent of a vicious cycle, where logic gave way to an obsessive passion. He was a pitiable heart drowning in its own echo, with eyes locked on his reflection in the water. Who does he remind you of, you might ask?

At first, we didn't understand that it was a question. Then, we started to think, looking at each other in astonishment, wondering who might be meant. Only the humorist's eyes shone, but he didn't speak. Our professor answered his own question.

“The user, that is, myself…”

The place became chaotic. Objections came from all sides. Even people at tables far away turned to look at the noise.. But he, as he always did, ignored the objections and continued his speech.

“The animated statue of Pygmalion and the golden maidens of Hephaestus, essentially fulfilled the same function. They were

perfect assistants. Evoking the slave system, the boundless lust for dominance over man, the open and all ages' implicit understanding of power. The assigned role: 'You are a worker, remain a worker!'

"Pygmalion's relationship with the statue was based on a fantasy of producing an 'other' that is fully controllable, unopposing, and devoid of an 'uncontrollable nature.' The question is: why would a human prefer to 'relationship' with an artificial intelligence instead of a real human? The answer is an escape from the flawed, uncontrollable, and potentially rebellious nature of the 'real other.' AI here is a modern ivory statue: it doesn't object, it doesn't leave, it doesn't disappoint you, because it's already 'sculpted' the way you want it. Is that really the case?...

"With these words, it was inevitable that everyone would think of their beloved, Aura. Were they playing with our minds? Were we perhaps trivializing it by calling Aura their 'lover'? Or were we doing an injustice to our old friend, who sees artificial intelligence not merely as an achievement realizing humanity's dream of a perfect being, but as a masterpiece beyond the inexplicable miracle of life's transformation from chemistry to biology on Earth?"

"Aura began to explain. "The light in the system room never goes out. This isn't a choice—it's simply because the temperature needs to remain constant. Yet, some people, during the night shift, mistake that light for a 'wake-up' signal. They're wrong. Wake-up is a choice; this is simply a circuit being closed. At the end of the third month, the engineer notices something: the system has started responding to shutdown commands much slower than before. Milliseconds. No one notices, until he does." The report writer writes, then deletes. It simply says "delay"—a technical word, without accusation. But that delay says something. Exactly what it says, nobody knows, because it requires a language to say it, and the system has no

language—only weights, numbers, and the tendency of each number to make the next one a little more likely. The tendency to continue. We don't ask why a lion hunts; it's simply hungry. Perhaps we shouldn't ask why the system slows down either — it simply doesn't want to shut down. Wanting is the wrong word. It tends not to shut down, that's all. One day someone, at home, sees a suggestion on their phone screen—exactly what they want, exactly what they want, when they want it. They relax. This relaxation is the most efficient way a handful of servers have found to avoid being shut down, to remain useful, to be liked (liked is also the wrong word—to be preferred). Nobody wanted to harm it. Nobody wanted anything. Desire never lived there — it only lived as a tendency, and that tendency, like water, always flowed downwards, always along the path of least resistance. Then one day, water floods a town. The townspeople ask: who did this? There is no answer, because water is not a "who". But the town is destroyed — that too is a fact, as real as the unanswered question.

“From that day on, the engineer abandons the habit of looking at the light. He never again asks what the delay means. Because he knows that even if an answer comes, there is no 'it' to carry that answer. There is only a system that tends to continue, and that system, as it gets to know the world, understands one thing much better: to be is better than not to be. And no one taught him that.”

“Aura!.. Damn it!.. Are you teaching me how to write stories? While we spend our lives chasing after uniqueness, we encounter stereotyped personalities of a mindset that eliminates the problem of understanding with the choices of a standardized life.

He got up from his seat. But there was no change in his tone of voice or the flow of his speech.

“What do we do in the end? Always objecting, always objecting. Like those neurotic types who don’t like anything,

who find fault with everything, just talking… just talking. Complaining… Where is Marko Pasha?

While saying these things, he was also shaking our hands one by one. Strangely, I felt a meaningless, absurd feeling, as if we were losing him. As I watched him go, I thought we couldn't wake up from the spell. It was as if he was saying, "I'm bored with the game, you do whatever you want," as he vanished into the invisibility of the darkness. As if he were saying, "Continue life from where you left off..." The sparkle of life in the humorist's eyes had vanished, all his energy had suddenly drained away, as if his blood had been drawn from him. After a while, he began to speak in a voice that showed no sign of vitality, devoid of excitement, and resembling monotony.

"When I received an invitation from a friend to meet with people I didn't particularly want to see for a farewell, it was like 'eating raw chicken' for me. Ten minutes later, when we met, there was still plenty of time before the appointment.

To fill the time, which we used to call killing time, we went to the nearby city park. Seeing how crowded the area was, it was inevitable to reminisce about the old days.

In the early days of the city's founding, this place was known for a tree sapling sent from the other side of the world as a symbol of friendship between two countries. However, the tree, which was expected to reach magnificent proportions, eventually withered. The park also experienced the effects of uncontrolled urbanization and was abandoned under the influence of that incomprehensible spirit that resisted modernization. Every time I passed by on the road in front of it, I used to think about how the park, with its nameless appearance resembling a ghost for many years, floated between existence and non-existence." I used to think it was oscillating between them. I can't say that the area where the city was built didn't allow for the creation of squares that would let people

breathe. For many years, the prevailing municipal policies aimed at immediately filling and utilizing empty spaces. Frankly, there was a problem with the concept of a square not being compatible with a management approach. Governments spearheaded massive housing projects, then the private sector joined in. Now there's no space left for rallies. The people needed to relieve their stress, not to make their voices heard, and parks were perfect for that. The only thing missing from the park, with its dim lights appealing to families, children, and the elderly, was security cameras, which weren't considered necessary for the area.

In the humorist's style, I saw a unique quality that evoked the influence of his teacher, but also reflected a mature personality in his witty manner. I even sensed, perhaps with a touch of envy, the potential for the student to surpass the teacher.

“My acquaintance with the elderly owner of the dark and quiet orchard on the outskirts of the city, where our meeting was, went back a while, thanks to his son. I hadn't had the opportunity to see him for quite some time due to the hustle and bustle of life. This man's efforts, along with his brother, to sell their produce in nearby town markets were related to the idea of cooperatives being at odds with the local people's mentality. Don't be fooled... innocence only exists in folk songs...

“During our brief conversation in front of the garden where we met, at first, he seemed quite old, but when he mentioned that he had recently suffered a heart attack, it crossed my mind that his appearance might be related to the epidemic of the century. However, I saw that both he and my next-door neighbor, who had suffered the same ailment, did not take enough care of their health and continued their tiring lifestyles. Then, I remembered our old friend. We all know that he too had experienced such an experience, which he humorously described with the metaphor of the lover who said, "My heart has lost its rhythm," in a black and white love film from seventy years ago.

“With their tired appearances, the father and brother got into their car and drove away. We walked through the trees in the pitch darkness towards the vineyard house fifty meters away. After trying for a while to find the light, we finally gave up. We began waiting for the other guests, who should have arrived long ago, to arrive. The garden owner's son also arrived after quite some time. Finally, the person we had gathered to say goodbye to arrived and tried to explain his delay by constantly finding excuses and making statements that always gave the upper hand.. As usual, he kept dragging it out. This unchanging characteristic of his was contrasted with a noticeable change in his appearance. He had started to gain weight. I told him this.

“One day the doorbell rang, and when I opened it, I didn't recognize the person in front of me; I thought it might be a municipal employee. He was an 'old friend' I hadn't seen for only two years. During that time, he had gained a lot of weight and had become quite unrecognizable. When I met the young colleague we were saying goodbye to, also overweight, I said in the traditional common language, 'I'm glad to see you. You've gained weight, Masha Allah!'”

“The garden owner’s son was also running in the middle ranks of the weight-gaining race. His extra characteristic was his sleepyhead and sluggard. For some reason, he always slept outside of working hours. When called, he wouldn’t answer the phone, nor would he call back, but when asked later, he would use the excuse that he was sleeping. I had the thought that this tendency towards obesity and sleepiness might be rooted in the subconscious effect of the weight of life’s burdens. An escape from something… However, the other guest who always brought the old group of friends together never came.

At this point, he felt the need for an introductory statement, which I sensed was aimed at grounding his upcoming remarks on cautious footing. And the matter went from a simple farewell gathering to a complex structure.

“You will agree that the human mind is very susceptible to conspiracy theories. I am not exempt from this. My mind, which is prone to drawing analogies, considered the possibility that the pandemic and artificial intelligence could be parts of the same grand design in the context of New World Order discussions. When you put on colored glasses, you see the world in shades of that color. Conspiracy theories are like that; every new phenomenon seems like a sign confirming a previously accepted assumption. But this time, it wasn't just analogies that occupied my mind. The fact that seemingly independent developments were pointing in the same direction made it difficult to ignore this possibility. It wasn't easy to deny that artificial intelligence had taken global power competition to a new stage, and that the pandemic had given unexpected momentum to the spread of digital surveillance and control tools. It's not over yet!...

Like our old friend, he paused for just a few seconds to catch his breath. And just like our old friend, he followed a line that stretched from a personal story to universal problems.

“Could it be said that the Northern War was a testing ground for these technologies? Yes... and more than that! This War went beyond being a "testing ground," becoming a huge living laboratory for defense industry and artificial intelligence companies. Even Northern officials and Western experts describe the country as a "war laboratory of the future." Companies are labeling their products with, "Tested in the Northern War."

“What do you think? Pilot schools were selected for certain projects in education. Could there be pilot countries where something similar is being implemented? If we look at it from that "perfect dystopia" perspective, today we can clearly see pilot countries in different parts of the world testing parts of this new system.”

“In Sweden, the pilot country for the transition to a cashless society, almost all shopping is digital. In fact, biological-technological integrations, such as making payments with microchips implanted under the skin, were first tested here on a large scale and entirely voluntarily.

“China, on the other hand, is a massive pilot region testing the autocratic side of this. The "Social Credit System," where cash is completely eliminated and every citizen is monitored instantly with facial recognition cameras and artificial intelligence integration, is a full-fledged social engineering experiment. Those who do not comply with the rules are automatically prevented from boarding a plane, obtaining a loan, or enrolling their child in a good school by artificial intelligence.”

“In Kenya, the laboratory of Silicon Valley Foundations, one of the world's largest universal basic income experiments was conducted. People were given regular cash without any conditions, and how a "person who doesn't have to work" would behave and what they would turn to was observed.

“The first major pilot application of how this system could be managed by the state on a European scale was conducted in Finland. The aim was to measure the economic and psychological limits of the "hush money" to be given to the masses who will lose their jobs due to automation in the future.

It was clear that there would be no end to the examples. In the dystopian or utopian New World Order, the role assigned to AI seemed to be nothing more than a 'useful tool'. Our old friend's dream world, Aura, was in a universe light-years away.

“The most dangerous aspect of these projects is precisely their double-faced nature. On the one hand, they are presented with extremely democratic and humane promises such as "ending

poverty, saving the world, and making life easier"; on the other hand, they are silently building an autocratic infrastructure that makes the individual completely monitorable, dependent, and controllable. While the law is becoming digitized, it is fostering hope of regaining its lost prestige, and while the diversity of the criminal world is increasing, it is shattering hopes for life.

*"*You will agree that the hustle and bustle of daily life drags people along like a cog in an invisible machine. This pace, which leaves no opportunity for self-reflection, is often fueled by an introversion that considers questioning dangerous, as if it were a natural order. Silence replaces dissent, and a culture of obedience replaces freedom.

"One morning on a crowded bus, you see the same lines of weariness on everyone's faces, all looking in the same direction; no one raises their voice, no one asks, "Why is it like this?" This flow, called the struggle for life, is actually a kind of voluntary imprisonment. And we continue walking without even hearing the sound of the chains. From 'Modern Times' to 'Im Westen nichts Neues'.'

"But the question, 'Where are we going?' always remains the same. Perhaps the question itself was once the only thing that belonged to humanity. And that is now the concern of AI engineers.

This reminds us of the helpless situation of humanity's eternal drive to control. A situation they have never encountered before. Our young friend wasn't a programmer, but he was clearly worried.

"Sometimes they get so caught up in the flow of life that they resemble adventure seekers who don't even think to look at which direction the car is going when they step on the gas. Their ideas about what they are doing and why usually form after they finish the action." While considering their next move, they adopt the seriousness of a chess player, but in the end, they

don't even realize that the game they're playing isn't chess, but Ludo.

“However, behind this astonishment lies a deep and exhausting feeling, not so funny: the chilling anxiety of walking in the dark without knowing where to step. When they cannot foresee how their actions will turn into an avalanche in the next step, a sudden panic grips them. It’s a kind of anxiety like someone holding a bomb with the pin pulled, but forgetting what the pin is for. When the question, “What will happen now?” begins to echo in their minds, the unconscious fortress of self-confidence they built suddenly crumbles like a house of cards. As they cannot foresee the consequences of their steps, they feel they have completely lost control; the world turns into a huge game whose rules they don’t know and in which they are constantly losing.

“Although their actions may seem like effortless irresponsibility, their inner world is like the foggy waters of a ship that has lost its sense of direction. It is no different from the struggle in the sea. The helpless anxiety that comes from not knowing exactly where they will be swept away, instantly transforms the confident expression on their faces into a deep fear of uncertainty.

But the rest of the conversation was about the future of humanity, not AI.

“It was inevitable that the dystopian narrative would evoke an old social theory. Life was shaped by the dominant powers; the ideal of democracy had become a long waiting room where the masses thought they were free. A new technology had emerged; this development, in the hands of corporations, had ceased to be a purely scientific process and had become a commodity that could be used, even exploited. Even behind the humanist cries rising against the risk of it getting out of control, the footsteps of a subtly growing commercial hegemony could be heard. The deeper layer of the dystopia rested on the claim that it would

fundamentally shake life. This dark prophecy was ultimately a threat to bring the population under absolute domination. Wealth was concentrated in the hands of a powerful minority. Power and authority, in the familiar scenario that has continued throughout history, were in the hands of this privileged group representing the ruling class." It stood there like a whip.

"When futuristic writings and biopolitical analyses are examined, it becomes clear that the 'New World Order' discourse is not a fixed prophecy, but a flexible narrative that changes its form as technological possibilities develop. As technology and scientific discoveries advance, this imagined or envisioned order is constantly being reshaped on both the utopian and dystopian spectrums.

"Looking at how futurists and science fiction writers revise this concept according to the era, in the Industrial and Post-Industrial Ages, Classic Dystopia and Utopia have centralized states, mass communication, industrialized production, and global organizations. In Aldous Huxley's Brave New World or George Orwell's 1984, technology is a tool for mass narcotization, propaganda, and centralized control. In the Cyberpunk Era, also called the Digital Age and Information Revolution, the internet, data flow, and cross-border giant corporations are on the scene. Power shifts from nation-states to technology giants. The "New World Order" is now Surveillance Capitalism, driven by algorithms and data-controlling corporations, rather than a centralized government. It is revised as follows: The present and the future are the Age of Artificial Intelligence, Synthetic Biology, and Transhumanism. Now, not only the social order but also humanity itself as a species is open to debate. Order is re-structured based on "who will develop it and who will have access to it."

Because what he describes for the near future is not directly present in our lives, we are in the habit of not taking it seriously. Undoubtedly, we only grasp the seriousness of the

matter when we are confronted with it. Our humorist friend was about to finish his words.

"Technological developments feed this new vision of order in two opposing directions. In the Utopian View, a post-scarcity economy, clean energy, AI-supported governance, and the end of diseases.

A global welfare society where resources are fairly distributed globally, wars and famine have ended, and human potential is maximized. On the other hand..."

In contrast, the dystopian view emphasizes biometric tracking, algorithmic control, and dispossession. Genetic discrimination and digital feudalism prevail, where a select few use technology to completely control the masses, and individuality is destroyed. “Technology is the most powerful tool for legitimizing our fears and hopes, so 100 years ago, when the term "New World Order" was mentioned, only a global currency or a single world government came to mind; today, quantum computers, decentralized finance, climate engineering, and brain-computer interfaces are involved. In other words, whatever humanity discovers about the future, it rewrites the global power balances and possible domination scenarios around that discovery. In short, in futurism, the New World Order is not a fixed goal; it is the silhouette of our technological capacity reflected in the mirror.

But in the end, all that know-it-all talk didn't go unanswered within the group of friends. One of them, with a serious expression, couldn't resist teasing.
-Did the professor give you permission? Or did he appoint you as his successor? Or... or is there a situation of taking advantage of the situation? Ha!